UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Administration
Washington, D. C.

May 13, 1942

ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMORANDUM NO. 11

Packaging Materials

In view of the scarcity of critical materials involved in packaging food stuffs being purchased by this Administration, it is the policy of the Administration that careful consideration be given to the type of containers that food products are packaged in before announcements are released covering the anticipated purchase of any particular commodity.

In an approach to conserve critical materials in packaging, two basic methods are possible: (1) to substitute methods of processing which do not require any careful packaging; (2) to place these commodities in packages made from less critical materials. In addition, by increasing the size of the package less materials are required per unit of food. The enclosed Suggested Rating of Materials for Packaging is being used as a guide by inter-bureau committees for making recommendations for conserving critical materials for packaging during 1943.

As an example of substitute methods of processing, a heavier cure on pork products would doubtless enable the shipment of hams, bacon and other commodities in wooden boxes or barrels instead of in tin cans as luncheon meats, canned bacon, etc. Commodities such as beans and other products can be transported, as you know, without being canned or packaged in small containers. In addition, every effort should be made to separate the Lend-Lease purchases into two categories: (1) products destined for distribution to the civilian population of our Allies; (2) products destined for use by the Armed Forces. In recommending packaging for the Armed Services, it is thought that the packaging of these products should be broken down as follows: (1) products used for camps and other permanent establishments; (2) products for use in the field under emergency conditions.

We believe if you will observe certain of these points, it will be of great assistance in reducing the amount of critical materials, outsized packages and packages calling for small units of products destined for Lend-Lease shipment.

At the present time, Conservation Order M-81 permits the use of tin plate for various items in the primary, secondary, and special products classes. In so far as products are concerned which are classified as non-essential, cans cannot be used unless the order is supported by better than an A-2 priority rating. This restriction also applies to off-size cans which are not authorized under the provisions of the conservation order relative to the three classes of products which are covered. Every effort should be made to eliminate the use of small cans and purchase announcements should be released only after consideration has been given to the size of the container involved to determine whether it is feasible to place the product in a larger can which will take less tin plate.

At the present time some products are being packaged in tin cans which can easily be placed in tight cooperage. We are, for instance, purchasing strawberries processed with SO_2 in wooden barrels, and other similar products such as cherries and peaches can also be packaged in the same manner. There are also a number of fruit products which are being packaged in tin at the present time which can be dried and packaged in boxes and other types of containers.

There is also a definite shortage of burlap bags, and because of the scarcity it would probably be advisable not to include burlap bags in any of the announcements in so far as packaging is concerned if the product can be packaged in either heavy cotton bags or in multiple-wall paper bags.

The requirement for having products packaged in steel drums should also be eliminated in all cases in which tight barrels can be successfully used. Due to the need for conserving steel for military purposes, the increased cost of packaging in tight cooperage should not be taken into consideration in accepting offers and it is suggested that where wooden barrels can be used at all, no provision be made in the announcements for packaging in steel drums.

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Administrator

Attachment

SUGGESTED RATING OF MATERIALS FOR PACKAGING

In the development of substitute containers for the packaging of foods for 1943, the materials in order of scarcity are: (1) tin; (2) rubber; (3) blackplate; (4) glass; (5) paper and paper products; (6) wood and wood products.

For the purpose of this overall survey in taking commodities out of the more critical materials by recommending packaging in substitute containers, the following combinations are possible:

(1) tinplate with standard coating (1.25 or in case of certain highly acid foods the use of 1.5 coating is recommended).

(2) tinplate with reduced coating made by electrolytic method.

(3) blackplate, including bondarized plate.

(4) glass with rubber gaskets for products which must be hermetically sealed.

(5) glass with metal caps without rubber gaskets.

(6) paper or paper board containers with metal ends (tinplate or blackplate)

(7) paper or paper board containers without metal ends.

(8) paper bags, paper board, solid fibre, cellulose products (cellophane, glassene, etc.)

(9) wooden boxes, barrels, baskets, hampers, veneer drums, etc.

In recommending substitute containers all efforts should be made to take commodities out of tin, blackplate and glass containers requiring hermetically sealed closures. In paper, the most plentiful supply of material is doubtless paper boards made from waste paper such as the cartons in which sugar, starch and similar commodities are now packed. The smallest expenditure of wood pulp is doubtless in the cellulose products, inasmuch as the amount of ground wood and chemicals used per pound per package of food is less than any other paper or wooden container. There is, however, a definite limitation on the manufacturing capacity for acetates and viscous, so it will not be possible to expand the use of cellophane and glassene too far.